

bill that continues to subsidize big agribusiness and special interests and that further subsidizes a crop insurance program that is rife with fraud, waste and abuse, it is just one more cut to a program that helps our most vulnerable neighbors.

Mr. Speaker, the November 1 cuts were devastating for 47 million hungry people. Just ask any food bank director in the country. Adding another \$8 billion cut to another 3 million families will cause even more damage. If my friends insist on changing the LIHEAP provision, then they should at least have the decency to reinvest those savings into SNAP.

Both Democrats and Republicans are talking a lot these days about the issue of income inequality. That is a good thing. So why on Earth would we pass a farm bill that makes the rich get richer and the poor get poorer? We can and must do better.

It is a scandal that in the richest country in the history of the world we have a hunger problem. Members of Congress rush to the microphones to promote tax cuts and ease resolutions on Wall Street. All the while, there are people in this country—men, women and kids—who do not have enough to eat. I will oppose any farm bill that makes hunger worse in America, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

In conclusion, let me say to my colleagues: there are some things worth fighting for. Ending hunger—making sure our fellow citizens have enough to eat—is absolutely worth fighting for.

UKRAINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, for the last few years, Ukraine has been working towards the signing of an association agreement with the European Union to increase economic and political ties with the bloc and to solidify democratic values and principles. The association agreement was to have been signed on November 28 through 29 at an Eastern Partnership Summit meeting in Vilnius.

On November 21, the Cabinet of Ministers in Ukraine unilaterally suspended negotiations with the European Union due to excessive pressure from Russia. Outraged by this, Ukrainians began to protest by creating European squares, or Euromaidans, across the country, including the capital of Kiev. In the early morning of November 30, the Ukrainian Government sent special forces to clear the Euromaidan in Kiev by using physical force and tear gas, resulting in many protesters and journalists with traumatic injuries and several still who are unaccounted for.

In response to the unprecedented use of force against peaceful protesters in Ukraine's history, several high-ranking deputies and officials in the governing party defected from the Party of Regions. Since then, protests have contin-

ued with a reported 1 million Ukrainians taking to the streets on December 1. Every Sunday since has brought at least 50,000 to the Euromaidan.

In the early morning of December 11, special forces, using chain saws and metal batons, broke through many makeshift barricades made of park benches and other available materials in order to encircle thousands of peaceful protesters on the Euromaidan in Kiev. In a 9-hour standoff with security forces, peaceful protesters on the Euromaidan stood their ground, singing the national anthem and praying every hour with local churches that were ringing their bells in support of the protesters.

In 2013, violence was used against more than 100 journalists in Ukraine, with almost half of the incidents occurring in December. On December 25, a well-known and respected Ukrainian journalist and civic activist, Tetyana Chornovol, was brutally beaten on her way home. Protest leaders tie her beating to her anti-regime reporting. Her severely bruised face is now used as a symbol of government repression.

The United States calls on the Ukrainian Government to respect Ukrainians' freedom of speech, their right to free assembly; and it calls on them to refrain from using force against peaceful protesters.

SUPERFUND SITES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, when I saw that the legislative agenda for this week was going to deal with the beleaguered Superfund program, I was encouraged; but when I saw what my Republican colleagues actually proposed, I was saddened and disappointed.

Across America, we are plagued by a variety of severely polluted hotspots known as "Superfund sites." Many are the legacy of past reckless or clueless business behaviors; Government, itself, shares responsibility as well. Local governments failed to properly zone and regulate businesses with toxic by-products. Sometimes government created problems with the way it operated sewer systems, solid waste management, and military operations.

The Superfund law, created in 1980, with a Superfund tax on the petrochemical industry, which caused the problem, would provide cleanup funding. It was reasonable at that time, but it has been frozen in place for almost 20 years. In 1995, the excise tax expired. Neither the program nor the problems have gone away, and having fewer and fewer resources has not helped. Sadly, the proposals the House will be considering this week would actually reduce the overall amount of funding that is available, undercut standards, and slow cleanup.

The Federal Government has created some of these problems, mostly caused

by military operations, which is the largest single source of Superfund sites in the country, but there are also situations like the TVA and its coal ash disaster.

Instead of enhancing the Federal commitment and capacity, this legislative exercise is an illustration of part of the problem. It is an attempt to look like we are doing something, but it has no chance of being enacted into law; and if it did, it would actually make the problem worse.

It is time for us to renew and refine the Federal commitment, not to complicate and undercut it. We should take a performance-based approach to zero in on what will actually accelerate cleanup in a demonstrable fashion and be able to move away from what has too often been a pro forma response.

The Federal Government should, indeed, clean up after itself and not leave the problem behind. The military should place Superfund cleanup as a higher priority in its budgeting. We have seen recent studies about pollution around military bases, like Camp Lejeune, that has had a severe impact on military families and their neighbors, linking contamination to a series of birth defects like spina bifida and to childhood cancers, including leukemia.

We should renew the Superfund tax, which I will be introducing in legislation this month. The Federal budget allocations should commit to cleanup, not passing the buck. We have settled into a program of sue, stall, and study as the inevitable result of a failure to work together to clean up, to protect the public, and to save money in the long run. I hope we will reject the Republican proposal this week and, instead, make a renewed commitment to find ways to make it work better.

TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on December 26, 2013, President Obama signed into law the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act, which sets policy and funding levels for the U.S. Department of Defense.

In large part, the bill went through regular committee order on the House side, with the consideration of amendments from both Republicans and Democrats. A somewhat similar series of actions was taken by the Senate. Despite a small amount of political theater, both Chambers not only found common ground in and passed this important measure, but in placing good policy before politics, Members overcame differences and acted in the best interests of the country—in this case, to the benefit of our men and women in uniform. Mr. Speaker, this is how the institution is supposed to work.

The measure offers our servicemembers resources to safely fulfill their

missions and the support that they deserve when they return from service. I offered an amendment to the bill, which passed as part of the final agreement. This will help improve the support we offer those who serve as they transition to civilian life, especially those coping with behavioral health injuries.

Under the previous policy, servicemembers and their families could utilize 180 days of health care coverage during the transition from military to civilian life through what is known as TAMP, the Transitional Assistance Management Program. Unfortunately, posttraumatic stress and other behavioral injuries oftentimes do not present symptoms in some cases until 8 to 10 months after leaving the military. Now, this can be overwhelming if not debilitating for an individual seeking to reenter civilian life and start the next path. This amendment extends TAMP coverage by an additional 180 days for all services rendered through telemedicine.

The amendment builds on a bill I introduced in 2011, the STEP Act, now Public Law 112-81, section 713, which expanded Federal exemptions for telehealth consultations across State lines by removing the individual State requirement that health professionals must hold licenses in the State where servicemember care is received. Health care professionals who are credentialed by the Department of Defense are now able to offer these services regardless of the patient's physical location.

In addition, it allows military doctors to reach more patients, and it allows more patients to access care without the stigma often associated with the seeking of treatment for the first time. If desired, such support can now be accessed from the comfort of one's own home, through video teleconference, Skype, and a range of other telemedicine practices. In part due to this commonsense change, in 2012 the Army was able to perform nearly 36,000 teleconsultations, which includes over 31,200 telebehavioral health clinic encounters. The numbers continued to grow in 2013.

For those burdened by physical and psychological injuries as a result of their service in uniform, we must take every action to help them rebuild and become whole. Both of these policy changes are positive steps forward in modernizing how the Department of Defense delivers health care, making widespread telemedicine possible and accessible to those most in need.

Mr. Speaker, Washington remains divided as we begin the second session of the 113th Congress, but I remain hopeful in knowing that bipartisan accomplishments such as this can serve as a guiding light for this institution in the weeks and months to come.

PASS EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge the House to consider and pass emergency unemployment benefits for the 1.3 million long-term unemployed American workers.

On December 28, 82,000 Illinois workers' unemployment insurance expired—38,000 of those workers in Cook County and 5,000 more in DuPage. The Senate has agreed on a bipartisan basis to extend emergency unemployment insurance, and the House should act today to do the same.

Opponents of extending emergency unemployment insurance may say isn't the emergency over? While the economy on the whole has improved, there is still an emergency, a jobs emergency.

There are 2.9 unemployed workers for every available job. Long-term unemployment is still at the highest rate we have seen in this country since World War II. Opponents of extending emergency unemployment insurance criticize the long-term unemployed, belittling their efforts to find work in this economy. For the worker out of a job for 27 weeks or longer, you have just a 12 percent chance of finding a new job within the month. These numbers continue to fall with each passing week. These workers face challenges to their health, to their mental well-being, and they often struggle with family relationships.

I left Chicago yesterday, where Illinois has the fourth highest unemployment rate in the country. Yet I come to Washington to inaction on unemployment insurance and jobs legislation. Instead of blaming workers, let us as Members of Congress look in the mirror. What have we done to address the issue of long-term unemployment?

Last year, we took dozens of votes to repeal the Affordable Care Act, but we have done little to create jobs. We have done nothing to advance immigration reform, which will infuse over \$1 trillion in our economy over the next 20 years and create jobs. We have done little to address the Nation's long-term transportation needs by investing in infrastructure, which will create jobs. We have done little to invest in research and education, which will grow our economy and make us more globally competitive, all of which create jobs.

Instead of playing politics, let us take it upon ourselves to pass meaningful jobs legislation, and let us extend benefits to these workers in their time of need.

HELPING FAMILIES IN MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I want to share with you a story today from Liza Long.

A year ago, Liza wrote about the difficulty she faces in raising a son who suffers from serious mental illness:

"I live with a son who is mentally ill. I love my son, but he terrifies me," she said.

A few weeks ago, Michael pulled a knife and threatened to kill me and then himself after I asked him to return his overdue library books. His 7- and 9-year-old siblings knew the safety plan. They ran to the car and locked the doors before I even asked them to. I managed to get the knife from Michael. I then methodically collected all the sharp objects in the house into a single Tupperware container that now travels with me. Through it all, he continued to scream insults at me and threatened to kill or hurt me.

□ 1030

That conflict ended with three burly police officers and a paramedic wrestling my son onto a gurney for an expensive ambulance ride to the local emergency room. The mental hospital didn't have any beds that day, and Michael calmed down nicely in the ER, so they sent us home with a prescription for Zyprexa and a followup visit with a local pediatric psychiatrist.

This problem is too big for me to handle on my own. Sometimes there are no good options. So you just pray for grace and trust that, in hindsight, it will all make sense.

I am sharing this story because I am Adam Lanza's mother. I am Dylan Klebold's and Eric Harris' mother. I am James Holmes' mother. I am Jared Loughner's mother. These boys—and their mothers—need help. In the wake of another horrific national tragedy, it's easy to talk about guns. But it's time to talk about mental illness.

Liza shared her story with my subcommittee last year at a forum of parents of children with severe mental illness.

After studying our Nation's mental health system for the past year as chairman of the Energy and Commerce Oversight Subcommittee, we discovered those families who need help the most are the least likely to get it. And where there is no help, there was no hope.

Federal programs meant to serve the severely mentally ill are failing. The Federal Government sets up barriers that make it increasingly difficult for mothers and fathers to care for a son or daughter coming of age who needs help for mental illness.

Our current policies block or interfere with appropriate treatment. Funds are wasted on ineffective programs, and scientific standards are not used in determining where the moneys go to for grants and treatments. Our current policies have replaced hospital beds with prison cells and homeless shelters as options for the seriously mental ill. That is wrong and that is immoral.

That is why I introduced the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, H.R. 3717, to deliver care to those with severe mental illness who need better treatment—real treatment—not excuses and not delays.

Today, Liza's son is doing better with the proper diagnosis and medical care.